

House Bill 159
April 5, 2011
Presented by Dave Risley
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Dave Risley, Fish and Wildlife Administrator for Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide information, in opposition of House Bill 159.

We oppose the limitations on the FWP Commission being able to regulate such things as the use of firearms, firearm accessories, or limitations on ammunition including chemical elements (toxic shot). The few existing FWP Commission rules pertaining to hunting that address firearms and their use were adopted through extensive public comment and review and ultimately, with the support of sportsmen and sportswomen across the state. This bill would prohibit any FWP Commission authority to address technological advances in firearms or to address public safety concerns pertaining to any firearm issues related to hunting.

We also oppose the repeal of 87-3-401. This would allow for rifle shooting of upland game birds such as pheasants or sage grouse.

Secondly, we believe that the language limiting game warden authority is unnecessary and redundant. FWP Wardens already hold limited status as peace officers inasmuch as we are generally confined to the enforcement of the fish, wildlife and recreational laws in Montana (Titles 87 and 23). It is also important that we continue to operate effectively and in a cooperative manner with other local state and our federal counterparts.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that we understand most of the reasons behind this bill. We do believe, however, that the extent to which this bill addresses the issues is a little overbroad, and we ask that our opposition be seriously considered.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.